

Abstract 582

TITLE: Strategies for Enhancing and Monitoring Treatment Integrity in Community-Based HIV Prevention Research: A Case Example

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ABSTRACT: Treatment integrity, the extent to which a treatment protocol is followed as prescribed, is critical for both internal and external validity of intervention research. Despite its importance it is given scant attention in intervention research and literature. In community-based outcome research ensuring intervention integrity is essential yet often complicated. This paper describes several strategies used to enhance and monitor treatment integrity in an HIV prevention clinical trial. The data were collected as part of a larger project designed to develop and evaluate a cognitive behavioral approach to the prevention of high risk sexual and substance use behaviors among black, Hispanic, and non-Hispanic white heterosexual couples in a large urban area. A standard semi-structured questionnaire, administered weekly to intervention group leaders, was used to monitor intervention implementation. Areas monitored included: session attendance; participant reactions; group processes; and leaders' performance of, and adherence to, the intervention protocol. Results of the monitoring system will be discussed. Implications for research and practice will include suggestions for using these research strategies to enhance and monitor the treatment integrity of community-based interventions.

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